



Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department



The role of public health is to:
PROMOTE community-wide wellness,
PREVENT disease, and
PROTECT the community from infectious diseases,
environmental hazards, and epidemics

Small Business Workforce Development Pilot Program

Austin City Council

December 9, 2010

Rosy Jalifi, Assistant Director, EGRSO
Vince Cobalis, Assistant Director, HHSD

Background

June 24, 2010

- Council directed the City Manager to develop a workforce development program incorporating classroom learning and on-the-job training in Austin's small businesses and to research funding opportunities to implement such a program

October 28, 2010

- Interim Progress Report provided to Council

Three Goals

- **Connect individuals to employment opportunities with small businesses**
- **Provide small businesses with a motivated workforce**
- **Make available business education curriculum to individuals interested in self-employment**

Stakeholder Input

Participants Included:

- **HHSD and EGRSO**
- **Travis County Health & Human Services**
- **Local Small Business Owners and Alliances**
- **COA Workforce Development Contractors**
- **Local Workforce Board**
- **Austin Community College**
- **Unemployed Job Seekers**

Stakeholder Conclusions

- **Very basic workplace competency skills are needed**
- **A formal Workplace Readiness Certification process/program is highly desirable by job seekers and small businesses**
- **Paid internships are a critical consideration affecting the ability of small businesses and job seekers to participate**
- **After job seekers become employees, maintain connections to develop the necessary combination of motivation and skills to succeed as employees of a small business**
- **Interested individuals would be identified to participate in Small Business Education curriculum for possible future self-employment or business ownership**
- **Funding for a modest pilot program would provide hard data to make a longer-term funding opportunity (i.e., grants) more viable**

Recommended Pilot Components

- **Common assessment tool at workforce development organizations**
- **Pre-employment training in general competencies leading to Workplace Readiness Certification**
- **Certified job seekers placed into paid internship in local small businesses that are selected for the pilot**
- **Internship wages paid by project - no requirement for businesses to permanently hire the job seekers**
- **Job seekers also matched with a small business mentor**
- **Job seekers' connections to workforce development agency maintained throughout program, including post-employment support if funding allows**

Next Steps

- **Hold activities related to this pilot until after the current Social Services Self-Sufficiency RFP is complete (May 2011)**
- **Plan and implement pilot contingent on Council approval and identification of funding**
 - Funding was discussed but specific sources were not identified
 - This may be best completed by a community organization, not the City of Austin
- **Evaluate pilot results to determine needed program adjustments and/or larger-scale feasibility**
- **If judged effective, seek and secure long-term, larger-scale funding**